

The Exploits of Elaine

A Detective Novel and a Motion Picture Drama

By ARTHUR B. REEVE
The Well-Known Novelist and the
Creator of the "Cag Kennedy" Stories

Presented in Collaboration With the Pathé Players and the Eclectic Film Company

Copyright, 1934, by the Star Company. All Foreign Rights Reserved.

SYNOPSIS.

The New York police are mystified by a series of murders and other crimes. The principal clue to the solution of the various incidents is a mysterious signal with a "smoking hand." The latest victim of the mysterious assassin is Captain Jennings, the insurance president. His body is found in his office, surrounded by the remains of a cigarette holder. The famous detective decides to try to unravel the mystery. What Kennedy's investigations lead him to find is that Jameson, a newspaper man, and Cag Kennedy out of the way of the Chinaman. It is found to be Jameson's office that Long Sin, the Chinaman, has been using for the last few days. The Chinaman comes from beneath the secret of the Chinaman's secret of life. Then he gives the Chinaman a note from Wu, who is his double agent for months. Kennedy's plan just after he has lost consciousness.

TWENTIETH EPISODE

SPOONTANEOUS COMBUSTION.

Wu Fang sat at a table in his apartment. Hidden behind the curtain and hidden exterior of a Chinatown tenement. Before him were a glass dish and a bottle, which contained several sticks of phosphorus immersed in water, and a small capillary glass tube.

For a moment, however, he had laid aside the strange paraphernalia and was writing a note. As he finished he tapped a bell and suddenly a Chinese servant appeared in answer.

"Pass this letter to that white woman, Inez," directed Wu, adding, "Give it to her yourself—and if she is there, return with her."

The servant bowed and Wu returned to work on the various machine he was creating.

He had completed his labors when his trusted lieutenant, Long Sin entered.

"For whom did the master summon me?" asked Long Sin, deferentially.

"Come here," beckoned Wu. "Behold this."

With a pair of tongs he seized a small stick of the phosphorus under water and slowly brought it to the surface. Almost instantly the dangerous element burst into flame, giving off a dense white smoke.

"Here I have a capillary tube, as the white devils call it in their language," said Wu, pointing out the glass tube. "My servants handling it and carrying the outlet of the water I can set a fire anywhere, at any time I choose."

Even while he was showing the devilish invention to Long Sin, his servant had sought the elaborately furnished apartment of the white woman to whom the note had been addressed.

She was an attractive young woman known as Innocent Inez. Except for a certain coquettishness, she strongly resembled Elaine, both in features and figure.

Inez turned languidly as her enored maid ushered in the servant of Wu, took the note and read it with interest.

"Well," she said with a sudden emission of energy, nodding at the same time to her negro maid to bring her hat and coat. "I will go with you."

Thus a few minutes later Inez entered the secret den of Wu Fang.

"Ah—this is the young woman," introduced Wu to Long Sin.

Carefully planning each detail down to the smallest possibility of error, Wu Fang and Long Sin completed their strangements and finally, with Inez left the apartment. On the street an automobile was waiting at the curb, but no far away two toughs from the neighborhood stood.

As the Chinaman and the woman came out Wu beckoned in the waiting roughnecks. "Come—get in—lively, he ordered.

They climbed into the car and the five criminals whirled rapidly up town.

Kennedy had often been amused at my never having a match when I needed it, and it had occurred to him to devise a very novel cigarette lighter for my benefit.

It was simple enough, consisting of a small battery connected by small wires to one of a pair of tiny links. One link had in its face a very fine wire, only a fraction of an inch long. To the link Craig had soldered the wires from the battery and arranged them so that they ran up under his coat sleeve through the armhole of the vest to the battery, which he carried in his vest pocket.

He had just completed his work when he heard me coming and hastily drew on his coat.

"Well, what's new?" I greeted.

"Nothing in particular," he replied.

"Have a cigarette?"

He handed his cigarette case to me and I took one. Then, unsuspecting, I began to search my pockets for a match, but, as usual, could not find one.

At last, half mockingly, he lighted his cigarette apparently on his cuff link.

"What new-fangled sort of thing is that?" I cried in surprise.

"I thought it might amuse you," he smiled, explaining the arrangement as he opened his vest and showed me how he made the electric connection.



Elaine's Double Receives the Note From Wu.

by a mere pressure of his arm. "I'll give it to you some day."

Naturally I was delighted by the novelty of the thing.

Elaine was reading to Aunt Josephine in the library when, not long after Wu's car sidled out of the maze of streets of Chinatown, it stopped a few blocks below the Dodge house. With Long Sin, Wu got out and assisted Inez out.

"Walk up the avenue—you know the house," he directed Inez; then, turning to the roughs inside the car, added: "You will calculate to catch up with her directly in front of the house. After that, meet us just below, around the corner."

Wu and Long Sin quickly walked downtown again, while Inez went on up, followed shortly by the car with the two toughs.

Inez had just finished the book and laid it down.

Suddenly, almost underneath the library window, she heard agonizing screams of "Help! Help!"

An instant later Jennings came rushing into the library from the hall and threw open the window to look out.

Inez had been just about to pass the house when Wu's car drove up and stopped. Without warning, apparently, two toughs had leaped out and seized her.

"Oh, they're trying to kidnap that poor girl!" cried Elaine, remembering her own terrible experience.

Jennings was out of the door in a moment followed by Elaine and Aunt Josephine in a great state of excitement.

But the moment the toughs saw old Jennings coming from the Dodge house they ran to the car as if thoroughly frightened and drove away as swiftly as they had come, while Inez sank down on the sidewalk, seemingly overcome.

Once Mistress Inez induces Elaine to sit in this chair," observed Wu, tapping it significantly as he closed the trunk. "Half our work is completed."

Uptown Inez, always on guard, was watching for the safe arrival of the trunk, when she saw a messenger boy coming up the steps of the house.

Perhaps, it flashed over her, it was some message from Kennedy. She must get it, whatever it was.

Without hesitating a moment she slipped back into the library while the boy was still at the door and wrote a note of her own at the desk. She had thought out beforehand just what plan she was to adopt and the note read:

Dear Miss Dodge:

The ladies of the First Baptist church will send a collector for our rummage sale this afternoon. We thank you for whatever you can give him.

Yours truly,

Miss Ella Burns,

Secretary, Woman's Guild.

Inez read over the note she had written herself as the messenger boy continued ringing the bell impatiently. Then she hurried into the hall to open the door.

The boy came in and Inez took the note he had brought, signing Elaine's name for it in his book. She had acted not a moment too soon, for Elaine had heard the bell and was now coming downstairs herself.

"Was it anything for me, Inez?" she asked.

Inez deftly palmed the letter and substituted the note she had written.

"Yes, ma'am," she replied, handing Elaine the fake note.

Elaine read it. "I didn't know about the rummage sale before," she commented, as she went into the library. "But I guess I'll have to give them something."

She sat down for a moment to look over a new fashion magazine. Outside in the hallway Inez was reading the note which the messenger boy had brought, with the warning postscript written by Kennedy underneath. She knew, as she destroyed it, that it was only a part of Wu's subtle plan to alarm Kennedy and start him on a false scent.

It was not many minutes later that the bell rang again, and this time Jennings answered the door, discarding the expressman with a heavy trunk.

"Oh, I guess that's my trunk," Inez exclaimed. "May I have it taken up to the attic, out of the way?"

The men carried the big trunk upstairs into the attic, a large room full of trunks, some old furniture and a great many old dresses hanging up. As they set it down she signed the receipt for it, and the expressman clumped downstairs.

For a moment she leaned over the railing and looked after them to make sure that she was alone, then hastily locked the door and ran back to the trunk to unlock it.

First she took out the chain which Wu had devised and placed it near the clothes hanging up. Next she removed the phosphorus mechanism and placed it in the shadow back of the chair, piling up some excelsior and other dry stuff over and around it.

Inez had scarcely completed her arrangements when it occurred to her that she was there to intercept the call.

She had transformed herself into a full-fledged maid, looking very pretty in her neat cap and apron, and making herself useful in a hundred ways about the Dodge house.

Without being obtrusive she was seldom out of hearing of the telephone, however, and it happened that just the moment when Craig called up she was there to intercept the call.

"He got away in spite of me," I managed to blurt out as I resolved Kennedy in the hall. "What's that?"

"A note of some kind that he dropped," replied Craig, passing over to me the paper he had picked up. I read in English:

"See what he is doing and report to me in the basement below 116 Mott street."

Beneath the few words, evidently orders, was that mystic sign of the serpent—the mark of the archerina mal, Wu Fang.

"It's a clue, Craig!" I exclaimed.

For a moment Craig said nothing, as he turned to go back into the laboratory. For some time he continued to study the note, as though revolving something in his mind.

"Whatever it is," he remarked at length, "I'm going to look into it anyhow. While I'm gone, Walter, I wish you'd just sit around and see if Elaine is all right."

At last Kennedy sauntered in, easily to the big joint on Mott street, his collar still up, and his hat still over his eyes.

He bumped across the floor among the smokers and picked out a hookah while Hop Sing, the proprietor, brought him a pipe. Kennedy pretended to light it, but in reality did not.

In the back room, by this time, had compassed her disguise by placing on her head a wig and had given the little finishing touches to her makeup. Wu was giving final instructions to Long Sin and the rest, and the four Chinamen ranged themselves in groups of two on either side of the door.

Elaine, down in the library, had done nothing yet about the letter from the Women's Guild.

"I wonder what she is upstairs that I can give them," she thought, as she re-read the letter. "I think I'll see."

She started up, just as Inez was leaving.

The adventuress in the attic heard the scream and the crashing of glass behind the door. He straightened up in his bunk, saw all attention.

Was it some white woman calling for help in this shank of Jacob?

The door flew open. There, in a woman appeared, still screaming.

It was only for an instant and she did not even get across the threshold. With a low, guttural exclamation, Long Sin pulled her back into the room and slammed the door she had opened.

It was all done so quickly that Kennedy could catch only the poor flailing glimpse of his children and that last glimmer was enough.

It was—apparently—Elaine!

Craig sprang up instantly, clutching his revolver and threw himself against the door, reviving the warning message that had come through the mail.

The door yielded and he rushed through. In an instant the four Chinamen crowded in after him.

The struggle was terrific. He downed two and writhed in a fair race to win across each other, when the disguised Inez turned, with mocking laugh, pulling off both the hat and wig.

Kennedy's amazement gave the Chinamen a chance. Before he realized it, in his complete surprise, he was forced back on the mat and held there just long enough for Long Sin to wind a rope around him, binding his arms, legs and torso in the knot.

Then Wu Fang walked over to him and taunted him.

"Come over here, my dear," he said. "I have learned something valuable about the Chinaman and I want to tell you."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"How did you leave the real Elaine?"

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Craig, "but I don't understand what he means."

"I'm glad